

UTAH ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS
FOR
Utah Elementary Core Curriculum

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Utah English Language Proficiency Standards for Utah Elementary Language Arts

Under No Child Left Behind, Title III requires that each state develop English language proficiency standards aligned to that state's language arts, math, and science. Utah English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for the elementary core for English Language Arts were created in response to NCLB requirements. Subsequently, the Utah State Board of Education authorized the English Language Proficiency Standards to undergo public hearings. Prior to completing public hearings, a pilot study was conducted at Anna Smith Elementary in Tooele School District for a full academic year. The purpose of the study was to identify what learning/teaching knowledge and skills are necessary to implement the Utah English Language Proficiency Standards. The ELP pilot study evaluation is included for Utah schools to consider as the implementation of the ELP Standards takes place.

In order to develop the standards, advisory, working, and review committees were assembled. A group of Utah educators in the fields of literacy and language development worked together to design the Utah English Language Proficiency Standards under the expertise and advice of Utah higher education experts. Internal and external facilitators provided additional support to the Utah educators for the completion of the Utah ELP Standards from January to June 2004.

The Utah English Language Proficiency Committees took three approaches to design the standards: one, review the Utah Elementary Language Arts Core Curriculum; two, review the National Standards for Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) Standards; and three, review ELP Standards of various states that have similar ELL populations to Utah's.

After completing an extensive review of the Core Curriculum, national standards, and ELP standards from other states, the ELP Standards Writing Committee decided that teachers would receive better support if the ELP Standards used a side-by-side format created by John Carr from WestEd in California. One side of each chart shows the Utah Language Core Curriculum Standards, and the other side shows the English Language Proficiency Standards.

The side-by-side format allows teachers and administrators to quickly match the Utah Language Arts Core Curriculum standards and objectives (what students are to know) to the English Language Proficiency Standards (what students know and are able to do).

English language proficiency standards are based on language acquisition theory and practice. According to research, second language development takes place in stages. In order to define these stages, the Utah ELP Standards Committees created the English language proficiency descriptors (pre-emergent, emergent, intermediate, advanced, and fluent).

The ELP Standards are designed to supplement the English Language Arts (ELA) Standards to ensure that ELL students develop proficiency in both the English language and the concepts and skills contained in the ELA Standards. The majority of ELLs in Utah schools have not displayed literacy in their first language; a supplement to this document will outline those early and basic literacy skills that must be taught before presenting skills contained in this document. The Utah Educational Network (UEN) provided a grant to develop supplementary materials (lesson plans and classroom activities) that will be placed online for teachers to use.

The ELA Standards assume that all students attain proficiency on the ELA Standards, but also recognize that not all learners will acquire skills and knowledge at the same rate. This is especially true for Utah's 41,955 English language learners. 8.6 % of Utah enrollment is not yet fluent in English. Such students enter schools with different abilities than English-speaking students who begin school having mastered basic English sentence structure and basic reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, English comprehension, and reading fluency. Many are unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet.

The ELP Standards address skills ELL students must acquire in initial English learning to enable them to become proficient on the ELA Standards. Tooele School District volunteered a highly impacted school with ELLs to be a site for a pilot study to implement the ELP Standards. During the 2004-2005 school year, monthly professional development and study sessions were conducted to find out what skills were essential for teachers to have to implement the standards. After the pilot study data analysis, it was determined that the following skills were critical for ELLs' basic English literacy:

- 1) Direct teaching of basic English vocabulary
- 2) Comparison and contrast of the learner's native sound system with the English sound system
 - a. What sound(s) are similar
 - b. What sound(s) are different
 - c. What sound(s) have equal sound correspondence
- 3) English sound system needs to be compared/contrasted with the student's home language sound and explicitly taught to students
- 4) Use of student data to make instructional decisions
- 5) Use of curriculum mapping to create lesson plans
- 6) Use of student data (English acquisition and language arts) to monitor progress
- 7) Use of frequent interventions based on diagnostics and monitoring progress data

In terms of instruction and planning, the school reading specialist and teachers determined that curriculum mapping is an effective way to implement the ELP Standards.

To obtain public comment, the standards were posted on the Internet and twenty public hearings were conducted state-wide at Utah districts, schools, and a public library in Weber County. In addition, *close to 300 Utah teachers field-tested the ELP Standards*. The ELP Standards will be submitted to the Board for final approval in September 2005. After public hearings, the ELP Standards will be submitted to the Utah State Board of Education for adoption.

The Utah Language Arts Core Curriculum contains the content standards for all students. The Utah ELP Standards identify the expected knowledge, skills, and understanding for each student and content standards at different grade levels. Utah teachers and administrators, by using the ELP Standards, will develop knowledge of how well ELLs understand the content standards according to their language acquisition level.

Currently, the Utah Secondary Language Arts Core Curriculum is in process of revision. Upon completion of the revision, the ELP Standards will be aligned with the Utah Secondary Language Arts. Additionally, alignment with the English Language Proficiency Standards will be completed for the Utah Math and Science Core Curricula during the 2005-2006 school year.

In order to support teachers in academic instruction for ELLs, it is necessary to understand that *academic English* is different from everyday speech and informal writing. *Academic English* is found mainly in textbooks, classroom discussions and activities, and formal writing.

The ELP Standards must be accompanied by English language development classes to create effective content area instruction comprehensible to students. English development classes are a way to develop both *basic* and *academic* English. *Basic* English is social language that is used in the playground, in the halls, and in social situations.

The ELP Standards offer teachers a roadmap to prepare instruction in content areas for ELLs. Teachers will be able to monitor ELLs' academic English acquisition and provide interventions so that all students from kindergarten to high school can internalize English language skills in order to develop self-editing skills in grammar, usage, and word choice in speaking, reading, and writing.

Districts will benefit greatly from adopting ELP Standards because they provide criteria that can be used to document ELLs' progress or lack of progress in learning English. The ELP Standards also provide criteria that can be used to develop assessment(s) to monitor students' progress in acquiring basic and academic English.

The Utah English Language Core Curriculum assumes that all students have internalized grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and recognition of print in English. However, this is not completely accurate for the 41,955 Utah English language learners who are not

yet proficient in English. ELLs need to catch up with their English speaking counterparts whose English sentence structure is fully developed, and who possess vocabularies of between 2,000 and 8,000 words.

The ELP Standards are designed to develop fluency in English acquisition and language arts knowledge and skills. This document outlines the process of language development for ELLs that are typically acquired by native-English speakers. Teachers must teach these skills along with the English language arts skills

The ELP Standards provide, step-by-step, what students need to know and able to do so teachers can support ELLs in moving through the ELA Standards toward full proficiency at each grade level. The ELP Standards integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing at each grade level as it is aligned to the Utah English Language Arts Core Curriculum.

The ELP Standards are organized with information for teachers, so they can ensure that English language development is taking place for the following grades in elementary school:

Kindergarten through grade 2

Grades 3-6, literate in their primary language

Grades 3-6, not literate in their primary language

Note: The ELP Standards were designed for students who are literate in their first language. For ELLs students who enter Utah school system in grades 3-12, literacy standards for early grades include direct instruction on knowledge and skills related to phonemic awareness, phonics, concepts of print and decoding skills taught according to the most recent research findings.

Recent research (McLaughlin, August, Snow & Carlo, 2000) strongly recommends that all ELLs, regardless of their English proficiency, including oral proficiency, receive instruction in reading and writing in English. As English oral fluency and English proficiency develop, reading instruction is to be provided. This standard is embedded in the ELP Standards. ELLs must achieve proficiency in basic reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, concepts of print and decoding skills), by the end of grade 2. By the time ELLs complete the intermediate level, they will demonstrate proficiency in the basic reading skills whether they are literate or illiterate in their first language.

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Glossary

Academic English	<i>Academic English</i> is found mainly in textbooks, classroom discussions and activities, and formal writing.
Basic English	<i>Basic English</i> is social language that is used in the playground, in the halls, and in social situations.
Phonemes	are the smallest units of sound in language. ELL students must master English sounds to a certain level of proficiency in order to understand English and communicate orally in English. Lack of mastery of sounds will result in accented speech.
Phonics	A system of teaching initial reading and spelling that stresses basic sound-symbol relationships and their application in decoding words.
Total Physical Response (TPR)	Total Physical Response (TPR) is an approach to teaching a second language developed by James Asher, an American professor of psychology. TPR is based, first and foremost, on listening, and this is linked to physical actions which are designed to reinforce comprehension of particular basic items.

APPENDIX A